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The Pampas, or Prairies, of Argentina

ARGENTINA

By E. M. NEWMAN

Lecturer and Traveler

MENTOR
GRAVURES

THE COLON
THEATER,
BUENOS AIRES

THE NEW HOUSE
OF CONGRESS,
BUENOS AIRES

MEMBERS' STAND
AT RACE TRACK,
BUENOS AIRES



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Fountain in Plaza de Mayo, Buenos Aires

MENTOR
GRAVURES

THE SPANISH
MONUMENT AT
PALERMO PARK,
BUENOS AIRES

TRANS-ANDINE
RAILWAY

LA RAMBLA AT
MAR DEL PLATA

THE MENTOR · DEPARTMENT OF TRAVEL · SERIAL No. 112

ARGENTINA, (The Argentine Republic) wealthiest of South American Republics, is about one third the size of the United States and one of the greatest of food producing countries. It ranks first in the production of flax, second in corn, and third in wheat. It has more sheep than any other country except Australia and in cattle is second only to the United States. It contains the greatest stretch of level and fertile plains in the world. Within its borders is the largest city in the Southern Hemisphere, the second largest Latin city in the world.

The Argentine Capital, Buenos Aires (Bway'-nos Eye'-rez), is a city of about 1,750,000 population, and if, as has often been said, Paris is France, the importance of the French Capital is outclassed by the significance of Buenos Aires to Argentina. Only in recent years has the city greatly improved. About twelve years ago its thoroughfares were littered with rubbish; its sewers were open conduits. Today it is one

of the world's most beautiful cities with miles of macadam and asphalt paved streets, and a modern system of drainage and sanitation.

BEAUTY OF BUENOS AIRES

Its public buildings are marvels of architectural beauty. Among them is the new House of Congress, but recently completed at a cost of \$8,000,000. In some respects the House of Congress resembles our own National Capitol, especially its dome, which dominates the view from every direction. Most of the business streets are very narrow, averaging but 33 feet in width. Therefore, street cars and vehicles are permitted to move only one way and on the adjoining street traffic moves in the opposite direction. In striking contrast to the narrow thoroughfares is the broad and imposing Avenida de Mayo, which intersects the heart of the city. It has broad sidewalks and rows of trees, and is lined on either side by modern hotels and shops, reminding one strongly of the boulevards of Paris. In the evening the open-air cafés on its broad walks emphasize the resemblance to the French Capital. At one end of the Avenue is the Plaza de Mayo, on which is now located a branch of the National City Bank of New York, an evidence of the commercial awakening of the people of the United States to their opportunities in South America.

The city contains the finest hotels in the Southern Hemisphere, several of which will compare favorably with the better class hotels of the United States. Perhaps the best of all is the Plaza Hotel, which is under the Ritz-Carlton management, and is first class in every respect. The Plaza Hotel faces the Plaza San Martin, a beautiful park named in honor of the great patriot and soldier San Martin. On this plaza is one of the most imposing homes in the city, the palatial residence of the owner of La Prensa, the most influential newspaper in the Republic. Residents of the city are known as Portenos (people of the port), and their pride is remarkable, as anything outside of the capital, they call the camp, or the country. It is true that the city contains the wealth and culture of the Republic; that it is the center of social as well as political life. "There



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BUENOS AIRES



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AVENIDA DE MAYO, BUENOS AIRES

is nothing in any other city that cannot be found here," is the proud boast of the Porteno, and in a general sense, this also is true. Nothing seems to be missing but the elevated railroad, and an elevated railroad in the Argentine Capital, as noisy as some in the United States, would be no improvement.

A prize is offered each year by the municipality for the handsomest structure that is erected. The award is in the hands of a regularly organized commission, and while the money goes to the architect, the owner of the building is exempted from paying taxes for a certain period of time and is reimbursed out of the city's funds for the sum expended in creating a street front of artistic design. As a result Buenos Aires is rapidly becoming one of the world's most attractive cities. The Argentines have learned the lesson of city planning and city building, and in consequence, on their principal thoroughfares, we observe symmetry and harmony in style of architecture, and uniformity in height of the buildings.



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NATIONAL CITY BANK, BUENOS AIRES
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LOOKING OVER BUENOS AIRES
From the roof of the Plaza Hotel

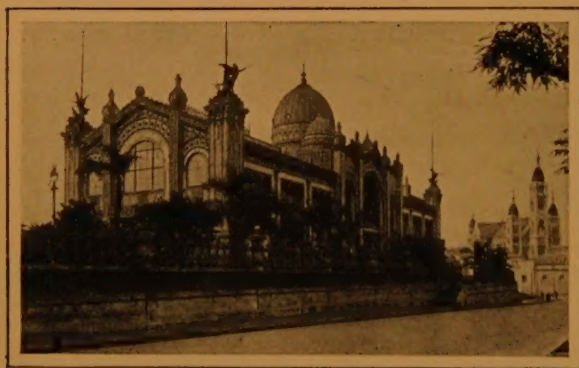
WEALTH OF BUENOS AIRES

The wealth of the Republic came very rapidly from the rise in land values. It has brought about a general waste, evident both in the municipality and in the country. Nature has been so bountiful that conservation has not been studied, much less adopted, and money has been made so easily and rapidly that thrift has not been cultivated. The marvelous rise in the value of farm lands has made millionaires of many men, and along such avenues as the Alvear, are mansions interspersed with gardens—homes such as only the wealthiest could maintain. In the opinion of the Porteno, Buenos Aires is far superior to Paris. He will tell you of the Teatro Colon, the finest theater in South America and the home of grand opera. A thousand dollars is readily paid for a season box, and orchestra seats when no stars appear sell for \$6.00 each. When such artists as Caruso or Titto Ruffo are

announced the price per seat is \$9.00, and for a gala performance as high as \$17.00. Nowhere may wealth and beauty be seen in greater abundance, in no city is there a more remarkable display of jewels than on opera nights, when the foyer is a scene of dazzling splendor. Fond of dress, the Argentine tries to wear proper attire for all occasions; at night evening dress is the rule; should it be a reception in the afternoon the same careful attention to correct attire is usually observed.



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ENTRANCE TO THE SUBWAY, BUENOS
AIRES
At the Plaza de Mayo



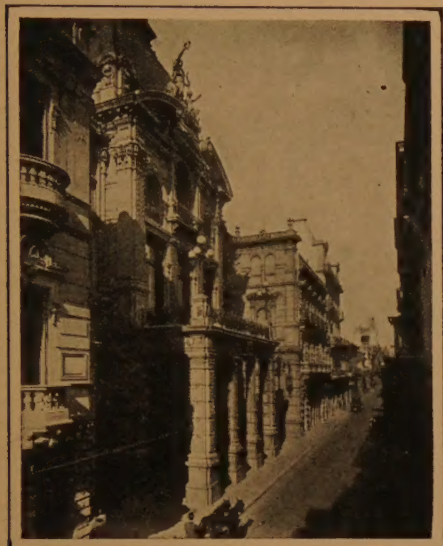
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ART INSTITUTE, BUENOS AIRES

THE JOCKEY CLUB

The particular pride of the city is the Jockey Club, where the entrance fee and annual dues are higher than in any club in New York. The initiation fee is four thousand dollars, the annual dues fifteen hundred dollars. The race track, called the Hippodrome, is a monopoly owned by the Jockey Club. More than sixty million dollars are annually wagered upon the horses, of which one half million is given to charity. The members of the club are now laboring under a great burden; they have in their treasury a *surplus of more than fourteen millions* of dollars and they do not know what to do with the money. Various propositions have been discussed for disposing of their burden. A suggestion was made to purchase a dozen blocks in the heart of the city, construct a broad and beautiful boulevard through

them and then present the improvement to the municipality, but there was some legal obstacle in the way, so another suggestion was made to build ten thousand homes for workingmen, the revenue to go to the city. Again the law intervened, so the members of the club are still puzzling over the perplexing problem of how to dispose of a burden of fourteen millions of dollars.

The race track is generally acknowledged to be the finest in the world; it is in reality three race tracks, one within the other. The longest course is one and three quarters miles in length, the second a mile and a half, and the third one mile. One section of the magnificent grand stand is reserved exclusively for the members of the club. Here one sees gowns designed by the creators of woman's attire.



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 THE JOCKEY CLUB, BUENOS AIRES
 The palatial home of the wealthy racing club

WOMEN OF ARGENTINA

The women of Argentina may wear the finest garments that money can buy, possess the most magnificent jewels, ride in the costliest of motor cars, but they are surrounded by social restrictions, which are never removed. Spanish conservatism does not permit of the carefree, happy existence of American girls, when they are in their teens. In Argentina a girl is either a *Nina*, a child, or a *Senorita*, a young lady. There is no such thing as being just a *girl*. No young lady is permitted out without a *duenna* or chaperon, and when a young man calls, the parents are present. There may be a few exceptions to this rule but they are very few. Large families

are common, even among the wealthier class, and it is not at all unusual to see families of eight or more children.

Outside the race track on race days, there is a long line of automobiles which melts away the moment the races are over and every vehicle then wends its way toward beautiful Palermo Park, where, joined by hundreds of others, they file round and round between the palms. It is a procession of human upholstery with expensive trappings, hats and gowns purchased in Paris without regard for cost.

The city is not only metropolitan but cosmopolitan. Were all the Italians gathered together, they would form a city larger than Genoa, and the Spaniards would compose a city larger than Toledo. North Americans, as they call us, do not cut much of a figure numerically, but they constitute an enthusiastic, energetic colony, which recently presented to the city a statue of George Washington. It has been conspicuously placed in Palermo Park, and in returning the compliment, one of the streets has been named *Estados Unidos*, which is the Spanish for United States.



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 THE RACE TRACK, BUENOS AIRES

SCHOOLS AND READING MATTER

Good schools are to be found in every part of the Republic, and while Argentina has borrowed much from us in its method of education, it is equally true that after the boys and girls have been graduated from the grammar schools, they are usually sent to France, there to complete their education. Manual training is taught in many of the larger schools, where the boys may learn various trades which may be useful to them when they grow to manhood. That they are not behind us in many things is evident when we are told that the principal newspaper, "La Prensa," publishes more foreign news than any other paper in the world. Its building is not only a complete and modern newspaper plant, costing three millions of dollars, but at its own expense it provides consulting rooms where an able



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BUILDING OF "LA PRENSA" IN
BUENOS AIRES
One of the leading newspapers in Argentina

physician and a competent staff of assistants administer to the sick without charge, and there is a law office where one may obtain free legal advice. When I visited the building owned by La Prensa I stepped into an American elevator and on the top floor saw the copy for the paper written on American typewriters. In the composing room they were setting the type on American linotype machines, and in the press room the paper was printed on American presses. With all this, we are obtaining only a fraction of the business of Argentina to which we are entitled. We must not forget that the Republic imports annually about \$450,000,000 worth of merchandise. In other words, this country with a population of about 7,000,000 imports more every year than China with its 500,000,000, and Japan with its 50,000,000; more per capita than any other nation.



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PRIVATE CAR, CENTRAL R. R. OF ARGENTINA



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STATION OF CENTRAL R. R. AT BUENOS AIRES

It is destined to be one of the richest of all countries, because of its fertile plains, affording pasturage for millions of cattle and sheep and offering limitless land for the cultivation of cereals.

FARM LANDS AND RAILROADS

A few years ago a square league of Pampas land (6,000 acres) might have been purchased for about \$2,500. Today it is worth \$50.00 an acre, so that a farmer worth about \$2,500 ten or twelve years ago now has a fortune of \$300,000.

What was formerly Patagonia or No Man's land, considered worthless a short time ago, now teems with roaming millions of sheep, and there has been a marvelous rise in the value of the land.

There are about 20,000 miles of railway in operation in the Republic. Most of the railroads belong to English capitalists. The annual receipts exceed \$100,000,000, but freight rates are excessive, as it costs about as much to transport freight across the Republic as it does to bring it from Europe or the United States. The equipment of most of the roads is good. There are modern dining cars and compartment sleeping cars,

and one may travel in comparative comfort to any part of the Republic. Two new railway stations have been recently completed. The architects visited the large cities of Europe and the United States. They adopted the best they found abroad, they copied the best they saw here, and as a result the stations are models of their kinds. One of the greatest achievements in recent years was the completion of the Trans-Andine Railway, connecting Argentina with Chile, and making it possible for one to go direct from Buenos Aires to Valparaiso by rail. Unfortunately, the road is at the present time open only a few months in the year. It will take an additional expenditure of many millions to make it more than a summer railroad. Excessive snowfall blocks the line throughout the winter months, and miles of additional snow sheds



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ARGENTINE CATTLE



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ARGENTINE SHEEP

will have to be built to keep the Trans-Andine open throughout the year.

THE OPEN COUNTRY

The camp, or the country, may best be characterized as an ocean of land spreading like an unruffled sea from horizon to horizon. On these level and fertile plains there are herds of cattle extending to the limit of one's vision. A single ranch may be as large as the State of Rhode Island and a single Estanciero (Es-tan-thieh-er'-o) or ranchman, may be the owner of several million sheep. One may ride all day in a motor car and not cover half the territory to which a single man possesses title. Everything is done on a large scale. Land is not sold by the acre, but by the square league (nearly six thousand acres); wheat is never purchased by the bushel, but by the metric ton (2,200 pounds); cattle are sold by the head, not by the pound.

While the pampas are usually treeless, Argentina does not lack for lumber, as there are forests along the foothills of the Andes larger than some of the European kingdoms. There is every probability that for a long time to come she will have to depend on her agriculture, as in the first place she lacks skilled labor and it will take generations to develop skilled mechanics; secondly, she needs raw material, such as coal, iron and steel, necessary for the manufacture of machinery. It is possible that as the Republic is gradually developed raw materials may be discovered, but in the meantime Argentina will have to import nearly all she needs except food.

Both business and agriculture are mostly in the hands of foreigners, as Argentina has not as yet developed talent for those industries and the people of the country are content to sit idly by and see their land rise in value from year to year.

ROSARIO AND CORDOBA

Second to Buenos Aires in point of importance as well as population is Rosario, the Chicago of Argentina, and its chief wheat market. It is a city of about



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A FINE RANCH HOUSE ON THE PAMPAS OF ARGENTINA



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A FARM SCENE IN ARGENTINA



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A PRIZE WINNING BULL

500,000 inhabitants situated on the Plata River over 200 miles inland, a thriving metropolis in the heart of a rich agricultural country. Another fine city is Cordoba, noted for its university, which was granting degrees long before any of our universities were founded. Cordoba boasts of both a stock exchange and board of trade, and has in its suburbs several health resorts situated in a range of hills. This rolling ground forms the sole exception to the monotony of the level plains which stretch for nearly 800 miles across the Republic to the Andes.

There are many other prosperous cities, such as Tucuman (Took-oo-man) in the northwestern corner of the country, which is in the center of a rich and growing sugar district, today one of the important industries of Argentina. It was in Tucuman that the Argentine Declaration of Independence was signed. So the city enjoys historical importance in addition to the fact that it is in the center of the sugar industry. Last but not least in importance is the fact that Argentina possesses all the variations of climate found in the United States, from the Straits of Magellan in its frozen South, to its semitropical North. It can therefore raise all cereals grown in this country, and generally much cheaper, as labor costs less there than here.



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A STREET SCENE IN
ROSARIO



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CORDOBA



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STREET IN CORDOBA

THE SEASONS OF ARGENTINA

I cannot too strongly emphasize one point that I think should be considered by every intending visitor to Argentina from the United States. Do not make the mistake usually made by the average North American and go to Argentina in our winter months. As you know, the seasons are reversed,—January, February and March are their summer months,—and anybody who is anybody leaves Buenos Aires and goes to Mar del Plata, a fashionable seashore resort, situated about 200 miles south of the Argentine Capital. During the hot months Mar del Plata is the center of wealth and fashion. Its "Rambla," or promenade, is at that period filled with a gay throng of promenaders, its palatial hotels crowded with guests. At this resort there are magnificent

private homes, a splendid beach where mixed bathing has only recently been introduced and a gambling establishment where they gamble for stakes equalled only at Monte Carlo.

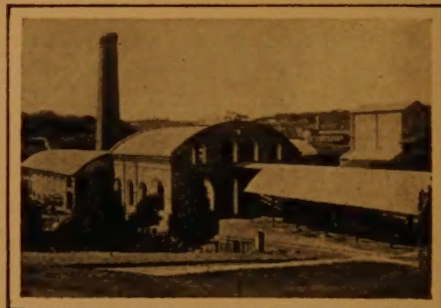
CLIMATE AND CHARACTER

The season in Buenos Aires and by far the best time to visit the city is in the months of June, July and August. It is in these months that the races are held and that one may hear the world's greatest operatic stars at the Teatro Colon. These are the winter months, when the climate is delightful, the mornings and evenings sufficiently cool for topcoats and furs, the days bathed in sunshine. It is during these months that the promenades in the beautiful Palermo Park are crowded, the drive-ways filled with motor cars and the life of Argentina is seen at its best.

Patriotism is the dominating characteristic of the native of Argentina. As James Bryce has observed, "He is completely up to date. He has both that jubilant patriotism and that exuberant confidence in his country which marked the North American of 1830-1860. His pride in his city has had the excellent result of making him eager to put it, and keep it, in the forefront of progress, with buildings as fine, parks as large, a water supply as ample, provisions for public health as



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PLAZA IN TUCUMAN



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SUGAR MILL, TUCUMAN



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THE HOTEL BRISTOL, MAR DEL PLATA



Courtesy, The National City Bank, N. Y. C.

SUMMER RESIDENCES, MAR DEL PLATA

perfect, as money can buy or science can devise. The wealth and the expansion of Buenos Aires inspire him as the wealth and expansion of Chicago have inspired her citizens, and give him, if not all of their forceful energy, yet a great deal of their civic idealism."

A recent and friendly observer has said that patriotism among the Argentines amounts to a passion. It makes them wish to stand well in the world's eyes and do in the best way what they see others doing.

Destined to become one of the world's richest nations, Argentina is a country well worth a visit and its capital city will afford a revelation to the visitor from the United States, who may have anticipated a slow Spanish city instead of a wonderfully modern and beautifully planned metropolis.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

THE SOUTH AMERICAN TOUR

By Annie S. Peck

An up-to-date book of information, fully illustrated with reproductions of photographs.

THE SOUTH AMERICANS *By W. H. Koebel*

Deals with the land and its people.

SOUTH AMERICA

By James Bryce

Observations and impressions topographical, political, and social of this great statesman and author.

MODERN ARGENTINA

By W. H. Koebel

ARGENTINA PAST AND PRESENT

By W. H. Koebel

ARGENTINA AND HER PEOPLE OF TODAY

By Nevin O. Winter

ARGENTINE PLAINS AND ANDINE GLACIERS

By Walter Larden

THE REPUBLIC OF ARGENTINA

By A. Stuart Pennington

Historical and descriptive.

THE ARGENTINE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

By G. B. Martinez and Maurice Lewandowski

Valuable as to industries, business, and resources.

••• Information concerning the above books and articles may be had on application to the Editor of The Mentor.



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South America is the continent of the future, and the eyes of the world are turning with eager interest toward the lands that lie there. The Mentor will cover South America in a series of interesting, authoritative articles accompanied by fresh picture material. The present number, devoted to Argentina, is the first of the series. It will be followed at short intervals by numbers devoted to Chile, Brazil, Peru and the other Southern countries. The first articles have been prepared by Mr. E. M. Newman, and they

present the results of a recent tour in South America. The illustrations are reproduced from photographs taken by Mr. Newman's photographer during his long trip. We print a map of the whole continent with this article so that Mentor readers may first consider the different countries in relation to each other. The other articles will be accompanied by special maps of the separate countries.

W.D. Moffat

EDITOR



Argentina

THE NEW HOUSE OF CONGRESS, BUENOS AIRES

Monograph Number One in The Mentor Reading Course



HE new House of Congress, the Capitol building, in Buenos Aires, greatly resembles the Capitol in Washington, D. C. It is a handsome building, beautifully situated on the Avenida de Mayo.

The Capitol is a noble example of the work of its designer, Victor Meano. Its cost was about \$8,000,000. The central façade is set a trifle back from the line of the projecting wings and is adorned with a fine portico and approached by a stately staircase having on each side an equestrian statue. Pillars support the central dome. The weight is about 30,000 tons; and to sustain this the foundations were laid 30 feet deep and an inverted dome of stone was fixed.

The interior of the building is beautifully arranged, and the reception halls and legislative chambers are magnificently furnished. The Senate Chamber is arranged for 30 members. It has two galleries for visitors. The larger Chamber of Deputies has three rows of galleries, one of which is especially designed for the diplomatic corps with a special reservation for ladies. There are conference rooms, a library, rooms for secretaries, and other chambers.

The Argentine Houses of Congress regularly meet from May first to the end of September. The Chamber of Deputies meets Monday, Wednesday, and Friday; the Senate, on the alternate days. For each 33,000 people, and for an additional half as many more, one Deputy is elected. The term of office is four years.

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THE COLON THEATRE THE HOME OF GRAND OPERA, BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

Argentina

THE THEATERS OF BUENOS AIRES AND THE PALACE OF JUSTICE

Monograph Number Two in The Mentor Reading Course



It has been said, and with truth, that the Colon Theater at Buenos Aires is without its equal in America, and perhaps in all the world. Its architecture is Ionic below and Corinthian above. The top of the building is of a rather composite construction.

From the main entrance of the theater on the Plaza a vestibule leads to a large hall eighty feet high. From this hall a staircase forty-five feet wide, adorned with statues, ascends to the level of the orchestra chairs of the auditorium. This auditorium is one of the largest in the world, seating 3,570 persons. The stage of the Opera House is sixty feet broad and sixty-five feet high.

This magnificent building is fireproof. Its original cost amounted to nearly \$2,000,000. It is a government building. The operas which are performed here have in their casts the most prominent singers in the world. It has been said that Argentina discovers the great singers; they come to New York later. Seats are more expensive than at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York; and the audiences are as brilliant as can be found anywhere in the world.

Across the way, on the west side of the Plaza Lavelle, is the new Palace of Justice. This is a building of great splendor, both without and within. Its cost was about \$1,500,000.

In addition to the Colon Theater, Buenos Aires has many others. At the Opera are performed light operas; the San Martin and the National Theaters are designed for the representation of the plays written in South America. There are, of course, many vaudeville and moving-picture houses.

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THE SPANISH MONUMENT AT PALERMO PARK, BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

Argentina

THE PARKS AND PLAZAS OF BUENOS AIRES

Monograph Number Three in The Mentor Reading Course

ONE of the most interesting ways in which to get an idea of the beauty of Buenos Aires is to drive through the city on a sunshiny afternoon. Buenos Aires is something between New York and Paris. It has the business rush of one and the gaiety of the other. Everybody seems to have money; and on fine afternoons there is a wonderful turnout of carriages and motor cars.

In driving through Buenos Aires the visitor may first go through a few of the streets in the center of the city. Then he will come to the fashionable Florida, a street distinguished by having no car tracks. Here may be found many of the most exclusive shops and also many fine residences. Here, also, is the magnificent home of the Jockey Club, which is, however, soon to be abandoned for a larger and still more costly building.

The Florida ends at the Plaza San Martin, one of the handsomest in Buenos Aires. It is surrounded by many splendid buildings, and is itself adorned with large trees, flowers, and shrubbery. The Art Museum is at the east end of the north side of the Plaza. Here, also, is the office of the United States Legation. The visitor will then return by the Reconquista to the Plaza de Mayo, passing many fine business blocks. Then, passing the Capitol, the Government Palace, and turning down to the left, he will come to the Parque 9th of July. This is one of Buenos Aires' 74 parks and plazas. The Parque 9th of July is modeled after the Champs Élysées. In the middle is a circle with an artistic fountain by the French sculptor, Moreau. At the north end is a pretty fountain by an Argentine artist, Lola Mora. All along the area are cafés, restaurants, and concert halls. The visitor will then proceed along the Paseo de Julio, with its shrubs and flowers; and continuing by the Avenue Alvear, will pass through the most fashionable quarter of the city. This avenue is lined with palatial mansions, and at the correct hour, is filled with vehicles.

Palermo Park is then reached. Its formal title is the Parque 3rd of February, recalling the defeat of the tyrant Rosas in 1852 by an army of soldiers from Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil.

Palermo Park lies on the edge of the city toward La Plata River. It corresponds to Central Park in New York City. The many beautiful shaded avenues, on the days of fashion, are thronged with carriages and automobiles. Thousands of people enjoy the spectacle; while the ladies display their beautiful clothes for the pleasure of all beholders. If the visitor continues his drive to the Lake, he will see the charming little pagoda-like Restaurant of the Lake. Within the area of the park itself are included grounds for various sports—cricket, golf, and rifle shooting.

The Botanical Garden of the park is extremely well arranged; and, although it is small, there is in it an excellent collection of South American trees and shrubs.



MEMBERS' STAND AT RACE TRACK, BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

Argentina

THE HORSE RACES AT BUENOS AIRES

Monograph Number Four in The Mentor Reading Course



HE horse races at Buenos Aires are the occasions for some of the greatest social gatherings in South America. In the Latin races, of which a great part of the population of Argentina is made up, the gambling spirit runs high. Everyone appears to be wealthy, and betting on the horses is a favorite amusement. At the races great crowds gather. The highest officials of state and city are there; and so is the world of wealth and fashion. Both clothes and jewels are the finest that money can purchase. Beautiful equipages and costly motor cars throng the streets leading to the race track. Hardly anywhere in the world does one receive a stronger impression of exuberant extravagance.

The Argentine Hippodrome is the great gathering place for those interested in races. The gala days are Thursday and Sunday. The spectators are accommodated on a row of great white stands. The one used only by the members of the Jockey Club and their families is largely of white marble. Behind the upper rows of seats is a spacious promenade with tables for afternoon tea; and still farther back are large well appointed club-rooms.

There are three race tracks, one inside the other. The longest is one mile and three quarters in length. Inside the track are flower-beds, greenery, and brooklets crossed by little white bridges. Outside the track the grounds are beautified with flowers, lawns, and various sorts of trees. During the races a band plays and the crowd itself, faultlessly dressed (at least the Argentines), is a brilliant spectacle that holds the eye in thrall.

The racing season begins about March 4, and lasts until December 30. The most important races are those for the Jockey Club prize, the National prize, and the International prize. These are true Society events. On these occasions the throng is so great that it is almost impossible to move.

In 1905 the winner of the National prize received \$27,000; in the year 1906 the betting was equal to \$20,000,000.

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TRANS-ANDINE RAILWAY, ARGENTINA



Argentina

THE TRANS-ANDINE RAILWAY

Monograph Number Five in The Mentor Reading Course



FORMERLY brave tourists were wont to make the trip across the Andes (the mountain range lying between Argentina and Chile and extending nearly to Panama) only with the greatest difficulty. Today tens of thousands of travelers make this trip annually in comfort and safety. This change has come since 1910, when the Trans-Andine railroad was opened.

This railroad now runs continuously through the year, although sometimes traffic is temporarily suspended because of snow slides which block the track on the Chilean side of the tunnel. This happens during the southern winter, from July to October.

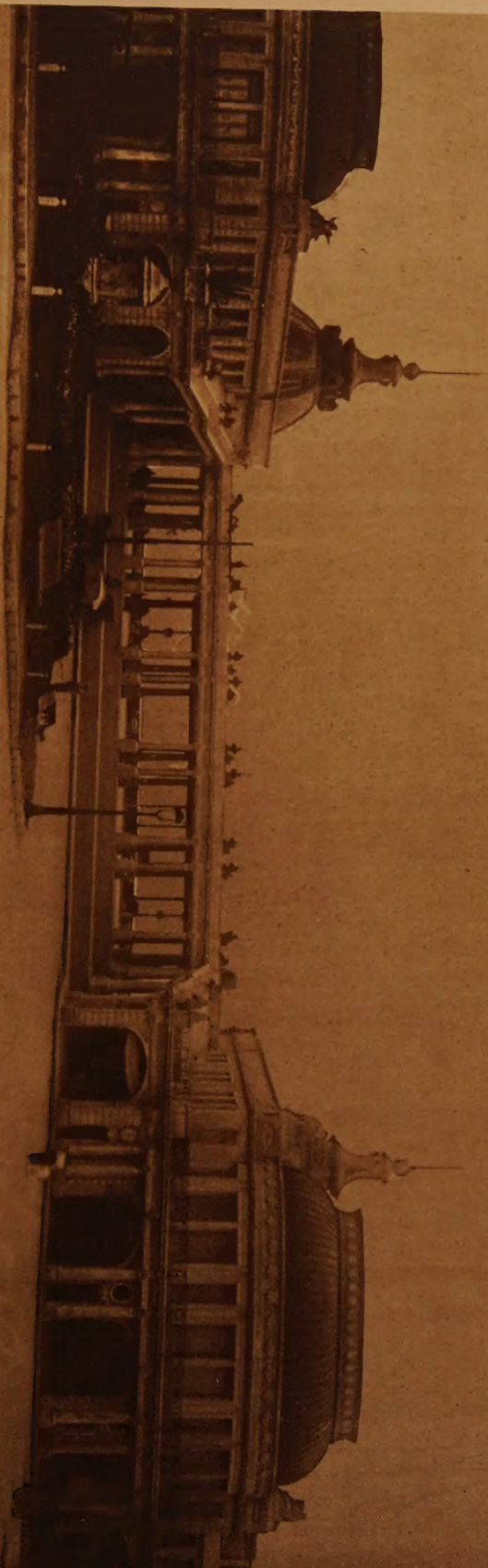
It is an interesting trip from Santiago in Chile to Buenos Aires in Argentina, although far less exciting than the trip used to be before the railroad came in. The real start is made at Los Andes, a pleasant summer resort of the Chileans. Here is the monument to the Clark brothers, erected in 1911, in honor of the initiators of this great railway.

In 1870 they applied for a concession, but it was not until 1886 that they received it. They were unable to complete their work, however. Railroad lines were built both on the Argentine and on the Chilean side; but then for sometime the work of construction stopped. In 1906 it was decided to pierce the main ridge with a tunnel, and this task was accomplished in time for the Argentine Centennial in 1910. The tunnel is two and one-half miles long, and it is 12,000 feet above sea level.

This Trans-Andine railroad involved great difficulties in its construction. Corkscrew, or zigzag, tunnels could not be bored, because the expense would have been too great. It was, therefore, necessary to adopt the cog-wheel system. With this system on the parts of the line where the grade is too steep for the locomotive, a cog-wheel apparatus is fixed between the rails, and the locomotive, fitted with a corresponding apparatus, climbs by its help. This naturally reduces the speed of the train, and, of course, reduces also the freight-carrying capacity of the line.

At the highest point on the line, which is a nearly level stretch, about a quarter of a mile across, among the massive hills and mountains, is what is said to be the most impressive monument in the world,—“The Christ of the Andes.” It is a bronze figure of heroic size, twenty-six feet in height. The story of its erection is very interesting.

In 1900 Chile and Argentina were on the verge of war over a boundary dispute. Finally this dispute was settled peaceably, and Bishop Benavente in Buenos Aires proposed on Easter Sunday, 1900, that a statue of Christ be erected upon the boundary to prevent, if possible, any recurrence of strife. In the following year the women of Buenos Aires undertook to secure funds for a statue. A young sculptor, Mateo Alonso, created the design; and the statue was cast from old Argentine cannon in 1904. The statue was carried by rail to Mendoza, and thence on gun carriages up the mountainside. On March 13, 1904, the dedication ceremonies took place. Hundreds of spectators came both from Chile and from Argentina. The mountains re-echoed to the booming of guns and the music. At last the monument itself was unveiled as a lesson of peace and good will.



Argentina

LA PLATA AND MAR DEL PLATA

Monograph Number Six in The Mentor Reading Course

THE trip from Buenos Aires to La Plata and return is a full day's excursion. The journey is made by rail. The first important station is Quilmes, named after an Indian tribe which was conquered thereabouts in 1670. In 1806 the British forces under General Beresford landed there for the capture of Buenos Aires. In 1827 Admiral Brown defeated the Brazilian squadron off the shore there during the war for the possession of Uruguay.

La Plata itself is a city made to order, as in the case of Washington, D. C. After Buenos Aires had been made the capital of Argentina itself, La Plata was made the capital of the Province, or State, of Buenos Aires.

The city is well planned with rectangular blocks. In addition, it has many diagonal boulevards, parks, and plazas. Because of the extraordinary growth of Buenos Aires nearby, La Plata has not developed as greatly as was expected.

The most important buildings are those of the government, the university, and, most famous of all, the Museum.

This, called La Plata Museum, has a world-wide reputation for its large collections. It was founded September 17, 1884. Its architecture, and the arrangement of the interior are equal to those of the most famous European collections. It contains many objects of interest, such as stuffed animals, the skeletons of pre-historic creatures, and pottery.

Mar del Plata, which is called the Newport of South America, is a very expensive and extremely fashionable seaside resort about 200 miles from Buenos Aires. In the summer it is crowded, and rooms at the hotels have to be secured well in advance. The Hotel Bristol is most luxurious and is modern in every sense of the term.

Mar del Plata itself has over 10,000 inhabitants. It is beautifully laid out with boulevards, plazas and splendid cottages. Its casinos, theaters, golf course, and bathing establishments place it in the front rank as a resort of wealth and fashion. La Rambla is the beautiful promenade in Mar del Plata.